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American School  
of Classical Studies  
at Athens

THE EXCAVATIONS AT CORINTH IN 1898

PRELIMINARY REPORT

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[PLATES IX-XI]

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WORK was begun at Corinth this year on March 23, and continued until June 11. I was present during the whole period with the exception of a few necessary absences of a day or two in Athens. Messrs. Brown and Dickerman assisted most efficiently from beginning to end. Professor Emerson was present about half of the time, and has taken the publication of the inscriptions in charge, and Dr. Cooley was occupied for nearly two months in photographing, and making the plans. He also remained two weeks after the close of the work to complete his measurements and drawings, being stopped at last by an attack of fever. Mr. Chase was also present for about a week.

The work was mainly confined in area to about an acre in the valley and on the side hill east of the temple and south of Trench III (PLATE IX); see the plan of excavations in the *Annual Report of the School for 1895-96*, p. 30 (repeated in this *Journal*, Vol. I, 1897, pl. xiv). The earth was carried to fields farther north, which had been tested and found to cover nothing important. For this transportation a track and twelve cars were borrowed from the French School. A force of about one hundred men was employed; and nearly \$3000 was expended in the actual work of the season.

A fuller report of the results, which are very satisfactory, will be given when the plans are ready. A brief summary, therefore, will suffice here.

(1) *Sculpture*: Five life-size and over life-size marble statues (unfortunately without heads), among which a nude female torso holds the first rank. Several reliefs more or less mutilated.

(2) *Vases*: An early geometric amphora 0.56 m. high, intact, with some other geometric vases in fragments; also a considerable quantity of Old Corinthian pottery mostly in fragments.

(3) *Bronzes*: A cock and a bull, each about two inches long.

(4) *Inscriptions*: One of the very oldest times, but unfortunately fragmentary; another of Roman times from the Jewish synagogue; a large number of other inscriptions both Greek and Roman mostly fragmentary.

(5) *Terra-cottas*: Several reliefs of a good period; a few figurines; architectural ornaments, notably lions' heads in a vine ornament.

(6) *Architecture*: Among the numerous pieces may be mentioned several capitals of different sizes composed of a calyx of lotus springing out of acanthus leaves, and some finely carved pieces of entablature, as well as six cornice pieces, with lions' heads, of Roman times; two fallen columns, not hitherto known, of the old temple.

But the more important results are the following:

(1) The discovery of a long building on the side of the valley towards the temple, consisting of a long wall running north and south with walls projecting from it to the east. This appears to be a stoa of Greek times.

(2) The uncovering to some extent of the white limestone pavement (PLATE X), which in 1896 inspired the hope that the Agora might be found near at hand, and so led to the choice of this field for our first serious attack. At a short distance to the south of Trench III, our starting-point, the pavement reaches the foot of a broad flight of more than thirty marble steps not yet entirely uncovered, which, as we now know, led up towards the Agora close at hand. By several soundings we proved the existence of the paved way in the other direction to a distance of about a third of a mile, almost to the northern edge of the

ancient city, and there remains little doubt that this was the straight road to Lechaeum (Paus. II, 3, 4).

(3) The discovery of Pirene (PLATE XI). This alone would make the campaign successful. At the southern limit of the excavation there was found a series of chambers constructed under the edge of a ledge of conglomerate rock by cutting away the softer clay rock below and inserting cross walls for

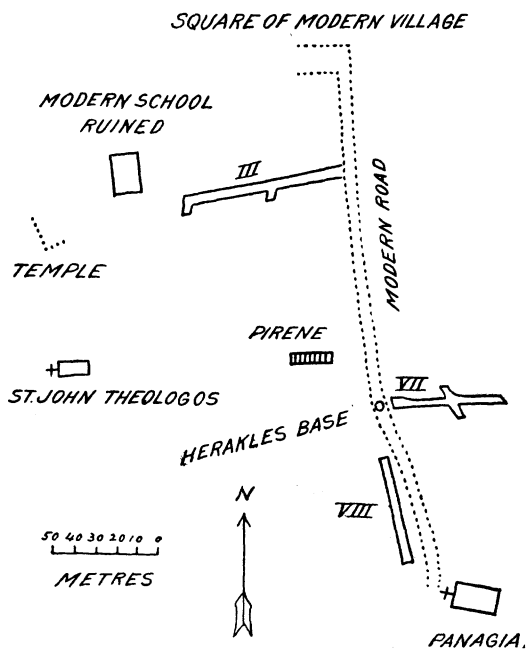


FIGURE 1. — EXCAVATIONS IN CORINTH IN 1898: SKETCH PLAN.

the support of the ledge. Along the back of the series the water was led in a channel from which in its course it overflowed into the chambers. The whole system corresponds so exactly to Pausanias's description of Pirene (II, 3, 3) as a series of cave-like chambers that it hardly needed the corroboration of a fragment of a Roman inscription, containing the word "Pirene," found within two feet of the façade, to exclude all doubt of the identity.

Three different periods in the architecture, one older and one later than what Pausanias saw, are clearly discernible. There is also proof that earlier than the earliest façade of which we have remains, the water was delivered at a much lower level through an arched channel which recalls the Cloaca Maxima. This was probably the Pirene of Periander. The fact that the water supply of the modern village still flows through the ancient courses made the excavation here difficult and anxious work.

Pirene as now uncovered is important as a capital example of the elaborate fountain façades which appear so often on Greek vases ; it is still more important in that in it is given back to us the most famous fountain of Greece ; but it is of supreme moment for the enterprise of excavating Corinth, since it gives the key to the topography of the city. From the description of Pausanias (II, 3, 2), we know that Pirene was a little distance north of the agora on the road to Lechaeum. The position of the agora being fixed, the old temple now receives its right name. It is the temple of Apollo, the first object mentioned by Pausanias on the right as one goes from the agora to Sicyon (II, 3, 6). The period of groping in the work at Corinth is past. It is now a question of time and patience and money. Two trenches dug about one hundred yards farther south than Pirene disclosed five walls that probably belong to the Agora. The peribolus of Apollo *πρὸς τῇ Πειρήνῃ* (Paus. II, 3, 3) has also been found and excavated. We have all the time there is ; the patience is promised ; and if the money can be had, "wealthy" Corinth is going to give its buried secrets, and the world will not be indifferent.

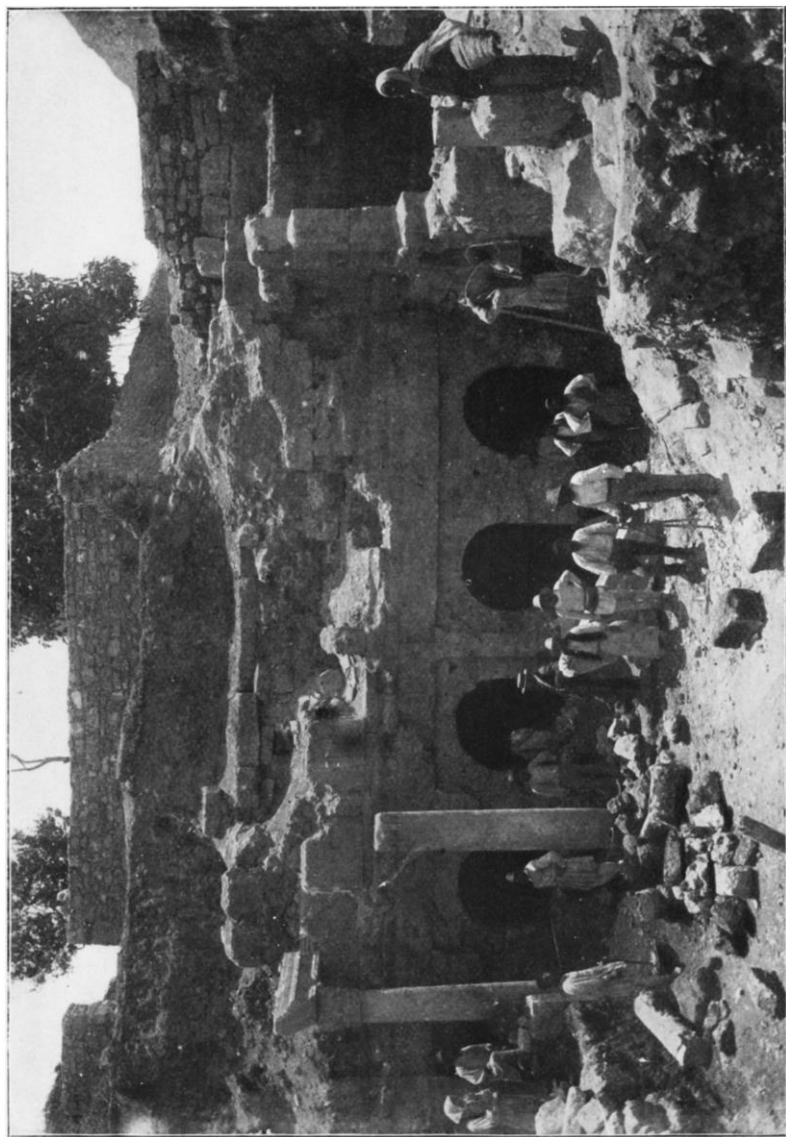
RUFUS B. RICHARDSON.



CORINTH IN 1898: GENERAL VIEW OF EXCAVATIONS



CORINTH IN 1898: ANCIENT ROAD



CORINTH IN 1898: PIRENE